The Chinese approach to artificial intelligence: an analysis of policy, ethics, and regulation

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Abstract

In July 2017, China's State Council released the country's strategy for developing artificial intelligence (AI), entitled 'New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan' (■■■■■■■■■■■■). This strategy outlined China's aims to become the world leader in AI by 2030, to monetise AI into a trillion-yuan (ca. 150 billion dollars) industry, and to emerge as the driving force in defining ethical norms and standards for AI. Several reports have analysed specific aspects of China's AI policies or have assessed the country's technical capabilities. Instead, in this article, we focus on the socio-political background and policy debates that are shaping China's AI strategy. In particular, we analyse the main strategic areas in which China is investing in AI and the concurrent ethical debates that are delimiting its use. By focusing on the policy backdrop, we seek to provide a more comprehensive and critical understanding of China's AI policy by bringing together debates and analyses of a wide array of policy documents.